

VZCZCXRO2988  
OO RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHPW  
DE RUEHNE #4450/01 2740826  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 010826Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8598  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 004450

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR G: ACBLANK, G/TIP: MTAYLOR, SCA/INS, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [OTRA](#) [SOCI](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: MWCD SECRETARY TO G/TIP - NEW INITIATIVES WILL  
HAVE IMPACT ON TIP IN INDIA

THIS IS THE CORRECTED COPY OF NEW DELHI 4442.

11. Summary: On September 17, Ambassador Mark Lagon, Coordinator of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP), met with Deepa Jain Singh, Secretary of the Ministry for Women and Child Development (MWCD). Ambassador Lagon presented Singh with the latest version of the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. In doing so, he highlighted the key issues in human trafficking for India: bonded labor, corruption and government officials, and national law enforcement coordination. Singh noted that none of those areas fall within the scope of her office's responsibilities, but she nonetheless was sympathetic to the challenges faced there. She asserted that her office was doing all that it could to address the issue of human trafficking, especially on the issue of rescue and rehabilitation, and mentioned several key GOI initiatives. End Summary.

Ministry of Women and Child Development Initiatives  
-----

12. In a meeting with Ambassador Mark Lagon on September 17, MWCD Secretary Deepa Jain Singh acknowledged the three priority areas mentioned by Ambassador Lagon (bonded labor, official corruption, law enforcement), but noted in an aside that none of those issues fell within the purview of MWCD. Instead, she focused on several MWCD programs aimed at addressing the protection side of the human trafficking problem in India. First, she referred to the achievements of the Swadhar program, which provides funding for rescue and rehabilitation services for victims of trafficking throughout the country but relies on NGOs for implementation. Singh acknowledged the limitations of the program and certain difficulties in implementation, but indicated that an evaluation of the program was in process. Second, she discussed her office's work with its counterparts in the Government of Bangladesh to repatriate Bangladeshi victims of trafficking brought into India. If successful, MWCD hopes to use the same model in its relations with other neighboring countries, such as Nepal.

13. In highlighting MWCD's efforts to push adoption of amendments to the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), Singh expressed disappointment that the amendments weren't considered under Parliament's monsoon session,<sup>8</sup> but was optimistic that they would be submitted in the winter session and ultimately passed into law. Those amendments incorporate more fulsome provisions addressing the demand side of trafficking for prostitution, including stiffer criminal penalties for clients. Law enforcement will be a key component in the fight to arrest both traffickers and clients, and Singh said that MWCD had encouraged Home Affairs to expand the current nodal cell<sup>8</sup> to coordinate the national law enforcement effort against TIP into a larger and

more effective office.

#### Protecting Migrant Workers

-----

¶4. Singh also responded to Ambassador Lagon's question about the plight of domestic female workers in the Gulf states. She commented on the work of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) and its efforts to assist migrant Indian workers. MOIA has established programs to educate migrant workers about the risks of human trafficking before they ever leave India, and Singh noted that the GOI is engaged in a dialogue with many Gulf States regarding the treatment of migrant workers.

#### Eliminating Impunity Through Awareness

-----

¶5. Ambassador Lagon highlighted the importance of law enforcement in the struggle to eliminate impunity from prosecution and hold traffickers accountable. Singh countered that in a country like India, governance and issues of accountability would always remain a concern if political will was lacking. She maintained that the Indian government was not resisting the adoption of stronger law enforcement measures, and stated, "Before you can have resistance, you first have to have some knowledge." Her office has thus taken steps to sensitize political leaders, both at the national and local levels, in an effort to raise awareness about human trafficking. Singh also remarked that useful policy initiatives must involve the local population, including women Panchayati (village) leaders.

¶6. Comment: Singh's comments suggest that while the central government remains committed to tackling the issue of human

NEW DELHI 00004450 002 OF 002

trafficking in India, India's size and scale as well as its federal democratic system make implementation of the country's laws a difficult exercise. Additionally, at the federal level, the division of this issue among several government agencies and the lack of a central coordinator for trafficking policy proves to be an unacknowledged obstacle in the formulation of a cohesive policy. However, the work of the MWCD, further documents the strides the GOI has made in addressing the problem of trafficking. End Comment.

¶7. Ambassador Lagon was not able to clear this cable before departing India.  
WHITE